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ABSTRACT

This paper asserts that if a single theme prevails in the story of Greater Boston's new immigration, it is diversity. No single group dominates in metro Boston. Diversity in country of origin is compounded by differences in ethnicity, socioeconomic background, legal status, and language. Issues of particular salience to immigrant communities include linguistic barriers in understanding and communication; cultural differences pitting the practices of the homeland against "American" ones; differences in look, dress or behavior (including religious differences) that might generate suspicion or discriminatory behavior; and the obstacles faced by non-citizens as a result of their legal status. The paper focuses on understanding the new face of Greater Boston (kinds of immigrants, such as undocumented migrants, lawful temporary residents, refugees, asylees, parolees, and lawful permanent residents; and race, ethnicity, national origin, and language); policy actors (federal, state, and local governments, nonprofit service providers and advocacy groups, and foreign governments and consulates); issues facing the region (processing newcomers, tracking aliens, becoming citizens, voting and elections, overcoming linguistic barriers, dealing with discrimination, work and income security, and building coalitions and community); and building a new Boston. (SM)

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Governing Greater Boston

Meeting the Needs of the Region's People

Charles C. Euchner, Editor

2003 Edition

Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston
Cambridge, Massachusetts

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3. The New Face of Greater Boston: Meeting the Needs of Immigrants

Irene Bloemraad with the assistance of Daniel Scholzman

Walk from the Dreams of Freedom Museum at 1 Milk Street in downtown Boston to the John F. Kennedy Building at Government Center and you see the past, present, and future of diversity in the metropolitan area. The Museum recounts the area's vivid migrant history: Irish escaping the potato famine of the 19th century, East European Jews fleeing pogroms and repression, Italian laborers coming for a short while to make their fortune, then staying and raising families in the North End. The stories are compelling and the sheer numbers staggering. In 1910, when approximately 15 percent of the U.S. population was immigrant, 31.5 percent of those living in the state of Massachusetts and more than 36 percent of Boston residents hailed from a foreign land, a record that still stands.[1]

A visit to the office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service in the John F. Kennedy Federal Building makes clear that immigration is also a contemporary story. A young computer programmer from India wants to renew his H1-B visa for another three years. A woman born in the Dominican Republic wishes to sponsor her husband for permanent residency. A Vietnamese senior, a former political detainee in his homeland, waits nervously to be interviewed for citizenship. As taxpayers, families and potential voters, these people will write the future of the region. Across the Boston metropolitan area, more than half a million people were born outside the United States.

(Greater Boston is defined, for statistical purposes, in one of two ways. The figure here refers to the U.S. Census Bureau's definition of the Boston Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area, with the exception of certain areas in New Hampshire. Elsewhere the metropolitan area is defined as the 101 communities of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. The two areas are roughly analogous, with 508,080 immigrants in the former and 490,641 in the latter. The overall populations are 3,398,051 and 3,066,394 respectively. Neither definition includes Lawrence, Lowell or Worcester.)

If current trends continue, the City of Boston might beat its old immigration record within two decades: the percent of foreign-born has climbed steadily—16 percent in 1980, 20 percent in 1990 and, in 2000, it stands at just under 26 percent. In Chelsea, more than a third of the population was born outside the U.S. in 2000, and in another four cities—Somerville, Brookline, Cambridge and Malden—over a quarter of all residents are immigrants. Of those living in Greater Boston in 2000, 15 percent were born in another country, compared to 12 percent state-wide and 11 percent nationally.

If a single theme prevails in the story of Greater Boston's new immigration, it is diversity. The area's new residents are richly diverse in their country of origin, legal status, racial and ethnic background, education and occupation, religious beliefs, and linguistic traditions. Unlike many of the country's gateway cities, no single group dominates in metro Boston.[2] Taken together, the five largest communities in the metropolitan area—Chinese, Haitians, Brazilians, Dominicans and Canadians—barely top a quarter of the immigrant population and no group totals more than 7 percent. Some populations concentrate in certain cities. In Chelsea and Lynn a quarter of the foreign-born come from El Salvador and the Dominican Republic, respectively, while in Framingham just under a third of the city's newcomers were born in Brazil. But across the region there are few constants. In Brookline, the Chinese community is largest (12 percent of the city's immigrant population), while Haitians are the most numerous group in the city of Boston (10 percent) and Cambridge (9 percent).

Boston's successful bid to host the 2004 Democratic National Convention played upon the region's diversity, highlighting the city's efforts to overcome its legendary tribalism.[3] The region's contemporary diversity constitutes an important break with the past, dominated as it was by a few groups. In 1910, approximately 8 of every 10 immigrants in Greater Boston came from just five countries—Canada, Ireland, Russia, Italy and England—with Canadians and the Irish each totaling about a quarter of the immigrant population. These immigrants, their children and their grandchildren—Boston's famed "white ethnics"—shaped the region's history for much of the 20th century as the once-dominant old-stock Yankees retreated from political prominence.[4] Today these groups dominate the governing bodies of most towns and cities, as well as the state legislature, but demographic patterns suggest significant future changes. As late as 1990, seven of the ten largest immigrant groups in the state of Massachusetts came from Europe or Canada. By 2000, only four of such groups remained in the top ten. In Greater Boston, countries of "new immigration" occupied the top four slots in 2000: China (about 33,600 individuals), Haiti (28,800), Brazil (27,000) and the Dominican Republic (23,700).[5]

The region's large and heterogeneous immigrant population differs from that of many comparable cities and regions. The city of Columbus, Ohio, which

is about 15 percent more populous than the city of Boston, has fewer than one-third as many foreign-born residents. The Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area, about 10 percent less populous than Boston, has only 41 percent as many foreign-born residents, half of whom come from either Latin America or Southeast Asia (including a large Hmong population). Nor does Greater Boston's heterogeneity resemble that of the Miami-Dade County PMSA, which is 34 percent smaller than Boston. Miami is the most immigrant-rich metropolitan area in the United States—a majority of the population is foreign-born—but the lion's share come from only a few sending countries, mostly in Latin America, with 48 percent from Cuba alone.

Diversity in country of origin is compounded by differences in ethnicity, socio-economic background, legal status, and language. Such differences cut across groups, generating divisions within communities, but also providing common ground between groups. Step into a restaurant in Boston's Chinatown and you might find that the owner—ethnically Chinese, but born in Vietnam—is a naturalized U.S. citizen. The man waiting tables comes from the People's Republic of China and is undocumented. The woman seated at the corner table, a biochemist on a temporary exchange visa, moved from Taiwan. To the puzzlement of her non-Chinese friends, she is having trouble communicating with the waiter and finally points to the menu item she wants. While both can read the menu's Chinese characters, the woman speaks Mandarin while the server only knows Cantonese. This dance of similarity and difference is repeated across the metro area.[6]

As with generations before them, these immigrants seek a better life in the United States. Some flee persecution or poverty in their homelands; many come to the Boston area to join family, pursue higher education or achieve economic success and the American dream. The benefits of migrating to the U.S. sometimes rest more in hope than reality, but as few as one in five will return to their country of origin.[7]

In many cases, the concerns of immigrants—affordable housing, good schools, decent jobs, safe neighborhoods—are no different from those of the general population. There are, however, particular issues of salience to immigrant communities. Chief among these are linguistic barriers in understanding and communication, cultural differences pitting the practices of the homeland against "American" ones, differences in look, dress or behavior, including religious differences, that might generate suspicion or discriminatory behavior, and the obstacles faced by non-citizens as a result of their legal status. In a series of meetings with immigrant community leaders hosted by the City of Boston, the Office of New Bostonians identified four key priorities affecting newcomers: discrimination/lack of cultural sensitivity, affordable housing, limited English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, and immigration issues.[8]

If immigrants face challenges—some positive, some more difficult—so do the communities that welcome them. Rapid immigration strains schools and public health systems, affects the availability of housing and employment, transforms an area's arts and culture, influences municipal and state budgets and shakes up the existing political status quo. These challenges must be faced because Greater Boston needs immigrants to maintain a vibrant work force and recover the population that inevitably moves out of the urban core. Immigration was responsible for 82 percent of the net growth in Massachusetts's civilian labor force from the mid-1980s to 1997.[9] If not for the arrival of thousands of newcomers, the population of Massachusetts would have shrunk in each of the past three decades.[10] Without the immigrants who entered during these decades, Massachusetts would have had two fewer Congressional seats.

Addressing the challenges that accompany the arrival and integration of tens of thousands of new immigrants requires constant coalition building. Given the diversity of the region's immigrants such coalitions will likely resemble the changing patterns of a kaleidoscope, with partnerships forming and re-forming depending on the issues and players. However, there also exists the possibility of polarization into groups, where some are incorporated into the region's political decision-making and others are largely shut out. Such polarization could occur along two main axes: the first, a division between haves and have-nots, the second between foreign outsiders and American citizens.

The first fissure follows the remarkable bifurcation in education, income and occupation among the immigrant population. According to findings from the Greater Boston Social Survey, conducted in the mid-1990s, just under a third of the foreign-born in the region had 16 or more years of education, a proportion quite similar to the native born.[11] (The region for this study included 156 cities and towns.) However, a striking difference emerges at the other end of the educational ladder. Most native-born Americans have completed high school; only 7 percent report 11 years of schooling or less. In contrast, 29 percent of the foreign born have had less than 12 years of education. Without effective programs and networks that create "ladders" of opportunity—such as on-the-job training, community colleges and job skills workshops organized by community based organizations—this population risks being trapped in economic ghettos. Since education and economic status are strongly related to political and civic participation, they may also be shut out of the region's policy-making structures.

Such economic bifurcation among the immigrant population is characteristic of many large metropolitan areas in North America.[12] In Boston, however, the splits are less pronounced than elsewhere. U.S. Census Current Population Survey data from 1997 show that 14.3 percent of the foreign-born in the Boston area lived in poverty, while the comparable figures in the most common destinations, the Los Angeles and New York areas, were 27.2 percent and 20.4 percent respectively. Indeed, divergence in economic outcomes is a feature of the general

American population and not restricted to immigrants. Racial minority groups, especially African-Americans, tend to do more poorly than most immigrants. Overall poverty rates are lower in Boston than many major metropolitan areas, but the Hub followed the national trend in the racialization of poverty: at 14.3 percent, poverty rates for the foreign-born as a whole are substantially higher than those for native whites (6.2 percent in the Boston PMSA), but much lower than those for native blacks (29.7 percent).[13] Immigrants might consequently benefit from coalitions with native minority groups.

But the political coalitions of racial and ethnic minorities are fragile. Disadvantaged Americans afraid of economic competition from foreign-born workers might work to exclude immigrants from the community. State and local governments have relatively little control over the immigrants they receive; settlement patterns are determined by federal policy and immigrants' own preferences. But state and local authorities can influence the reception these newcomers receive, thereby mitigating, or exacerbating, the integration process.

UNDERSTANDING THE NEW FACE OF GREATER BOSTON

Understanding immigration requires a plunge into a maze of legal statuses. An initial definition is relatively straightforward: an immigrant is anyone residing in the United States who was born on foreign soil and who was not an American citizen at birth.[14] Individuals born in Puerto Rico—who acquire U.S. citizenship at birth—are not considered immigrants, nor are those born abroad to American parents.[15] Unless otherwise specified, the term "immigrant" refers to all the remaining foreign-born. In 2000, this meant that 490,641 of the 3,066,394 residents (16 percent) in the area covered by the 101 cities and towns of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council.[16]

The percentage of immigrants in a community's population varies greatly across Greater Boston. Table 1 tallies the proportion of foreign-born among the 101 communities of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council region. In 14 communities, a fifth or more of the population is foreign-born, with Chelsea topping the list at 36 percent. Immigrants account for less than 5 percent of the population in 20 communities. The overall residential pattern follows the historic concentration of immigrants in the inner core of the region, with later dispersion to the suburbs.

But the data also show new patterns of direct migration outside the inner core. Chelsea and Cambridge figure among those communities with the highest share of migrants in the 1990s, but in Acton and Marlborough, 63 percent and 61 percent of the foreign-born population migrated since 1990. Framingham, with 58 percent recent immigrants, is fourth. The presence of friends and family draws some newcomers directly to the suburbs; others avoid the inner core for economic reasons such as housing costs and availability of jobs. Newcomers with sufficient financial resources sometimes prefer to move directly to middle-class

towns and affluent suburbs while cities like Boston and Cambridge increasingly fail to offer affordable housing to poorer migrants. In both cases, immigrants follow the movement of jobs to the suburbs, whether low-skilled factory work or employment in high-technology and biotechnology industries.

TABLE 1: FOREIGN-BORN POPULATIONS IN GREATER BOSTON

Below are the communities with a greater proportion of residents born in foreign countries than the state average of 16.0 percent.

Community	Population	Percent foreign born	Percent arrived last 10 years	Percent naturalized citizens	Percent non-citizens
Chelsea	35,080	36.1	59.3	20.1	28.9
Somerville	77,478	29.3	49.4	31.1	20.2
Brookline	57,107	26.6	53.6	43.5	15.0
Cambridge	101,355	25.9	56.9	31.6	17.7
Boston	589,141	25.8	48.5	37.3	16.2
Malden	56,340	25.7	49.9	39.1	15.7
Lynn	89,050	22.9	47.3	33.2	15.3
Everett	38,037	21.9	49.9	32.8	14.7
Randolph	30,963	21.6	28.7	60.2	8.6
Framingham	66,910	21.1	57.9	30.6	14.7
Revere	47,283	21.0	45.7	36.2	13.4
Watertown	32,986	20.3	37.5	54.3	9.3
Waltham	59,226	20.2	45.7	38.1	12.5
Quincy	88,025	20.0	44.3	52.6	9.5
Newton	83,829	18.0	38.5	57.0	7.8
Lexington	30,355	16.5	36.8	54.1	7.6
Medford	55,765	16.2	35.9	48.3	8.4
Marlborough	36,255	16.2	61.4	28.7	11.5
Total/Average	—	16.0	44.6	42.0	9.3

Source: U.S. 2000 Census

Kinds of Immigrants

The immigrant population can be divided into five distinct legal categories: naturalized U.S. citizen, lawful permanent resident, refugee or asylee, lawful nonimmigrant temporary resident, or undocumented (illegal) migrant. Legal status is determined at the federal level, usually by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), but also through the issuance of visas by foreign posts of the State Department.[17] State and local governments exercise no direct control over the

legal status of immigrants. But because very different rights and benefits accompany each legal category, state and local governments must reckon with the standards and rules of the federal government.

It is useful to review the different legal categories established by the federal government:

UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANTS have no legal right to be in the United States. Some enter the U.S. by avoiding border inspection. Others enter the country legally, often under a tourist visa, but stay beyond the length of their visa. Calculating the number of illegal residents is notoriously difficult. The Immigration and Naturalization Service estimates that 85,000 undocumented immigrants lived in the Commonwealth in 1996.[18] If trends from the early 1990s continued in the second half of the decade, the number of undocumented at the end of 2001 were estimated to total 115,000.[19] Because their stay is unauthorized, illegal migrants have limited rights and are subject to deportation if discovered by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

LAWFUL TEMPORARY RESIDENTS enjoy a formal legal status in the United States, but may not stay permanently. Most are foreign students (F visa), exchange scholars (J visa), or temporary workers (H, L or TN visa).[20] Greater Boston—with dozens of colleges and universities and strong demand for highly skilled workers in information technology, medicine and applied sciences—counts a relatively large number of temporary residents in its population. Table 2 compares the number of temporary visas given to those intending to work or study in Massachusetts to national totals and to those receiving permanent residence in 2000. Just under 3 percent of all permanent residents in the U.S. lived in Massachusetts, but over 7 percent of students and exchange visitors in the U.S. lived in the Commonwealth. Massachusetts was also home to 3 to 5 percent of those granted temporary work visas in the major employment categories.

Like undocumented workers, temporary residents enjoy limited political rights, but they are not subject to summary deportation unless they violate the terms of their visa. Temporary residents are required to pay income tax and payroll deductions on their U.S. income, but they are ineligible for public assistance such as food stamps, Supplemental Security Insurance, Medicaid, and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). Once their program of study or work contract is completed, some return to their country of origin.[21] Others apply for permanent resident status through an employer or after marrying an American citizen.

REFUGEES, ASYLEES AND PAROLEES are individuals who flee persecution or violence in their home country and who seek refuge in the United States. The 1980 Refugee Act and subsequent amendments determine contemporary U.S. refugee

TABLE 2: TEMPORARY AND PERMANENT RESIDENT VISAS IN 2000

The number of resident visas issued in different categories in Massachusetts and the United States. Figures include family members. Percent refers to the share of visas given out in Massachusetts as a share of the national totals.

Categories	Massachusetts	United States	Percent
Students	52,506	699,953	7.5
Exchange visitors	26,177	351,743	7.4
Temporary workers	27,742	672,943	4.1
Intercompany transfers	14,633	426,763	3.4
Free trade	6,016	113,460	5.3
Permanent residents	23,794	849,807	2.8

policy. Generally speaking, asylees are those who find transportation to the U.S. and then claim asylum after landing on American soil; refugees are selected abroad by the State Department and the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR) for third-country resettlement. Parolees are potential asylum seekers who face credible fear of harm if returned to their home country and who are "paroled" from INS custody pending asylum proceedings. Prior to the 1980 Refugee Act, the U.S. attorney general (acting on behalf of the president) had discretionary "parole" power to admit refugees outside of normal immigration policy. This power was first used by President Dwight D. Eisenhower to "parole in" 40,000 Hungarian refugees in 1956 and subsequently was used for diverse populations such as Cubans and Vietnamese.

The United States welcomes a larger absolute number of refugees for permanent settlement than any other Western country, but that number has been declining from a high of 217,000 in 1981 to an authorized ceiling of only 50,000 for FY2003. Following the events of September 11, with heightened concerns over the admission of potential terrorists, only 27,000 refugees entered the country; the U.S. had previously planned admissions for almost three times as many refugees. In FY2001, the INS recorded 3,006 admissions for Greater Boston.[22] Statewide, the majority of refugees arriving through the 1990s came from the former Soviet Union or Southeast Asia, in particular Vietnam or Cambodia; smaller groups came to the U.S. after fleeing conflict in Eastern Europe and Africa. Refugees, asylees, and parolees can benefit from special programs financed by the federal government and often administered by nonprofit organizations. After one year of residence in the U.S., refugees must apply for adjustment of their status to that of lawful permanent resident.

LAWFUL PERMANENT RESIDENTS—those who have their "green card"—are admitted by the INS to live permanently in the United States as long as they do not engage in criminal activities subject to deportation. In the 2001 fiscal year, Boston's INS office processed 17,585 applications for permanent residence in the region.[23] In a narrow sense, this is the only category of people who are true immigrants: they are not U.S. citizens, but they expect to remain in the U.S. indefinitely. Only permanent residents who have lived in the United States for five years are allowed to apply for citizenship.[24] Those who do not take U.S. citizenship must renew their "green card" every ten years.

Under the Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments of 1965, the INS administers a "preference system," allocating one of a limited number of permanent residence visas to the family members of people already residing in the U.S. or to individuals possessing skills needed in the U.S. economy. Additional visas, not subject to numerical limitations, are given to spouses, minor children, and parents of U.S. citizens. Boston receives comparatively fewer individuals under family reunification provisions. In 2000, 69 percent of all legal resident admissions in the U.S. stemmed from family sponsorship and only 13 percent from employment preferences. In Greater Boston, 55 percent of those admitted as permanent residents in 2001 entered under family sponsorship, 24 percent under employment preferences and 7 percent under the diversity lottery that admits individuals from historically under-represented countries.[25]

In many cases the rights and responsibilities of legal permanent residents are similar to those of citizens. Permanent residents can be drafted into the military, they pay taxes, and they are subject to all the laws of the United States while they live in the U.S. Citizenship, however, provides a number of additional protections. Citizens have absolute right of entry and cannot be deported. Only citizens are allowed to vote and run for office.[26] And, since the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (the "Welfare Reform" Act) of 1996, only citizenship guarantees eligibility for certain means-tested public assistance.[27] Citizenship is also required for certain occupations in government. For example, when the federal government took over responsibility for staffing airport screeners following the terrorist attacks of September 11, citizenship was added as a requirement for this position, threatening the jobs of many non-citizen airport screeners at Boston's Logan International Airport.

Naturalization is the legal process by which an immigrant becomes an American citizen. For those naturalized, the only distinction between their rights and those of the native-born is the inability to run for the office of U.S. President. In the MAPC area, 42 percent of the foreign-born are naturalized U.S. citizens, with percentages ranging from a high of 82 percent in Westwood to a low of 20 percent in Chelsea (*see Table 1*).

Race, Ethnicity, National Origin and Language

The evolving demographics of the United States, particularly in regions that attract large numbers of immigrants, sometimes makes it difficult to speak consistently about the experiences of different groups. Many people identify with one group but can plausibly claim membership in other groups at the same time.

The most prominent categories tend to be racial. Policy-makers divide the population into white, black, Asian, and Native American, then add an ethnic category for Hispanics or Latinos which may or may not overlap with race.[28] This vocabulary is sometimes ill suited for dealing with immigrants, especially if they are part of the first generation.[29]

Greater Boston continues to undergo an historic racial revolution. From 1990 to 2000, the percentage of whites living in metro Boston declined 2.5 percent. At 7.5 percent, blacks constituted the largest minority group in 2000, while Asians accounted for 5.4 percent of the region's population.[30] In terms of growth, however, the black population lagged far behind Asians: the black population increased 11.3 percent over the 1990s while the Asian population grew by 71.9 percent. If these trends continue, Asians will surpass blacks as the metro area's largest minority group by 2010.

The distribution of racial minorities is highly uneven across the 101 communities of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. As Table 3 shows, two communities stand out as having particularly significant concentrations of black residents—Boston (25 percent) and Randolph (21 percent)—while in 74 communities fewer than 2 percent of residents are black. At almost 150,000, Boston has by far the largest black population of the region; Cambridge comes a distant second at just over 12,000. Residential segregation is also acute within both cities, though the mixing of the races is greater than ever in neighborhoods as diverse as East Boston and Dorchester. The Asian population is more evenly distributed. Asians comprise more than 10 percent of the population in seven communities, and in only 47 of 101 communities do Asians account for less than 2 percent of the population. In absolute numbers, the largest Asian populations are found in Boston (44,345), Quincy (14,007) and Cambridge (12,112).[31]

During the 1990s, the number of Latinos in Greater Boston (of any racial background) also grew significantly, increasing by 49 percent to stand at 6.4 percent in 2000. Almost 44 percent are foreign-born, while 84 percent speak a language other than English in the home. The composition of the region's Latino population differs from many other large urban centers. Notably, the Mexican population is small, only 7 percent of the total, and the Cuban population is negligible at 3 percent.[32] Instead, the largest groups are Dominican, Puerto Rican and Salvadorian. By far the largest concentration of Latinos lives in Chelsea, totaling almost half of the city's population (48.5 percent) while the largest number, just over 85,000, lives in Boston, 14 percent of city residents. In the city of Boston the diversity of the region's immigrants plays out in the diverse origins of

its Latino population: the top three immigrant groups come from the Caribbean (Dominicans—12,608), Central America (Salvadorians—6,318) and South America (Columbians—5,001). In Chelsea, a majority of the Latino foreign-born hail from Central America, especially El Salvador (3,087), Guatemala (1,246) and Honduras (1,466).

Although the label "Latino" is frequently referred to as an ethnic category, it also turns on linguistic (referring to common Spanish language roots) and geographic (Central and South America) dimensions.[33] The distinction is important in the Boston context because Brazilians—over 5 percent of the region's foreign-born—are not officially counted as Latino by federal government agencies such

TABLE 3: MINORITY POPULATIONS IN GREATER BOSTON

Twenty-three of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council 101 municipalities have higher percentages of minority populations than the state averages. Percentages of all groups in some communities may total more than 100 percent since some Latinos are counted as white and Latino at the same time.

Communities	Population	White	Black	Asian	Latino
Boston	589,141	54.5%	25.3%	7.5%	14.4%
Quincy	88,025	79.6	2.2	15.4	2.1
Cambridge	101,355	68.1	11.9	11.9	7.4
Malden	56,340	72.1	8.2	14.0	4.8
Brookline	57,107	81.1	2.7	12.8	3.5
Newton	83,829	88.1	2.0	7.7	2.5
Lynn	89,050	67.9	10.5	6.4	18.4
Somerville	77,478	77.0	6.5	6.4	8.8
Waltham	59,226	83.0	4.4	7.3	8.5
Framingham	66,910	79.8	5.1	5.3	10.9
Lexington	30,355	86.1	1.1	10.9	1.4
Randolph	30,963	62.8	20.9	10.2	3.2
Burlington	22,876	86.7	1.4	10.6	1.3
Revere	47,283	84.4	2.9	4.5	9.4
Acton	20,331	88.4	0.7	8.6	1.8
Wellesley	26,613	90.0	1.6	6.4	2.3
Chelsea	35,080	57.9	7.3	4.7	48.4
Belmont	24,194	91.2	1.1	5.8	1.8
Everett	38,037	79.7	6.3	3.2	9.5
Salem	40,407	85.4	3.2	2.0	11.2
Weston	11,469	90.3	1.2	6.8	1.9
Milton	26,062	85.4	10.2	2.0	1.7
Boxborough	4,868	88.8	0.3	8.5	1.1
State	**2,276,348**	**81.2**	**7.5**	**5.4**	**6.4**

as the Census Bureau even though they come from South America. Individuals of Brazilian origin might nonetheless report themselves as "other" Latinos, given cultural similarities or the perception that they face discrimination similar to the Latino minority. At the same time, as a Portuguese-speaking community, Brazilians sometimes have more in common with Portuguese immigrants from Europe or with Cape Verdeans. Organizations such as the Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers, with offices in Boston, Cambridge, Lowell and Somerville, consequently reach out to a common multi-racial "Lusophone" population in the Boston area.

Similar diversity characterizes the black population. In the decades immediately after World War II, Greater Boston had a relatively small black community, almost entirely American-born, that was largely concentrated in the city of Boston. In 1970, just under half of all blacks had been born in Massachusetts, 45 percent were originally from the American South or other U.S. states, and only 6 percent were foreign-born.[34] By 2000, immigrants made up more than a quarter of the total (27 percent). The foreign-born represented approximately a quarter of blacks in the cities of Boston and Brockton, just under two of every five blacks in Cambridge, Malden, and Randolph, and roughly 50 percent of the black communities of Somerville and Everett.[35] Haitians, almost 29,000 strong in the Boston PMSA, constitute the largest group, but there are also significant populations from Cape Verde, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago. The black population is also linguistically diverse. While many West Indians speak English, the foreign-born black community contains large proportions of French speakers from Haiti and Africa, Portuguese speakers from Cape Verde, and individuals who speak a local Creole or African language. Fully 59,556 of 214,479 blacks in the Boston PMSA (28 percent) speak a language other than English in the home.

If immigration complicates the categories of "Hispanic" and "black," immigrant-generated diversity explodes amongst "Asians" in Greater Boston. Almost three-quarters of the Asians in the region were born overseas and 83 percent speak a language other than English in the home. While Latinos often share the Spanish language, and blacks face comparable prejudice and discrimination based on physical appearance, Asians share only limited linguistic and physical similarity. The three largest foreign-born groups are from East, Southeast, and South Asia: the People's Republic of China (33 percent), Vietnam (14 percent) and India (14 percent). Another 10 percent come from Western Asia, including Lebanon and Turkey. The latter, particularly the Boston region's substantial Armenian population, probably do not self-identify as Asian, but the degree of commonality between individuals from the Indian sub-continent and those from East and Southeast Asia is equally open to question.[36] Some local groups, such as the Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence, do span cultural and linguistic divides by

offering services to a wide range of Asian immigrants, but most groups tend to focus on regional populations.

Some Asian immigrant communities have developed distinct residential concentration such as Boston's Chinatown, the Vietnamese community of Dorchester, and the Cambodian communities of Lynn and Lowell.[37] Others are dispersed throughout the region, sometimes completely avoiding traditional areas of settlement in the inner core. In particular, the Indian community, the third largest immigrant group in the Boston PMSA, does not figure in the top ten foreign-born communities of the city of Boston.

Patterns of residential concentration in part stem from the way in which immigrants enter the country. Boston's historic Chinatown, established in the late 19th century when discrimination made it more or less impossible for Chinese laborers to live elsewhere, remains a magnet for new arrivals attracted to the region by kinship ties and job opportunities. Refugee groups, such as the Vietnamese and Cambodians, formed dense residential communities when settlement agencies located new arrivals in areas of relatively cheap housing and close to mutual assistance associations and other nonprofit organizations offering settlement assistance. Subsequent chain migration has further expanded these communities. In contrast, many Indians, Koreans, and Japanese enter the country under skill visas that allow them to work in the region's technology, engineering and medical fields.[38]

Finally, the influx of European and Canadian immigrants that dominated Boston in the 19th and early 20th century remains a factor in the region today. The "white" population is consequently a mix of diverse nationalities, ethnicities, and languages. Ten percent of the region's white, non-Hispanic population speaks a language other than English at home and more than 7 percent of non-Hispanic whites were born outside the U.S. This group of over 200,000 immigrants is just slightly smaller than the region's entire black population and larger than the Latino or Asian populations.

Of the ten largest immigrant groups in the Boston PMSA, four are primarily white persons who come from Canada (22,847), Italy (21,866), Portugal (19,610), and the United Kingdom (16,420).[39] Italians came mostly in the decades immediately following World War II, while post-World War II Portuguese immigration dates from the 1958 Azorean Refugee Act (sponsored in part by Senator John F. Kennedy) and reached its high point in the 1960s and 1970s. Canadian migration has resulted from post-war family reunification and, in recent years, a substantial influx of students and skilled workers, the latter arriving under the "TN" visa created by the North America Free Trade Agreement. Those from the United Kingdom similarly come via a mix of family sponsorship and work and study opportunities. In the last 15 years, the region has also become home to a substantial Russian community, mostly composed of

Jewish migrants, which is centered in Brookline and Brighton, and to a smaller community of refugees from the former Yugoslavia.

POLICY ACTORS

In few other policy areas are such a diverse array of federal, state, local and even international actors involved in shaping and administering programs directed at immigrant and refugee populations. The following is only a rough guide to the major players.

The Federal Government

A number pf permanent and temporary entry visas are issued overseas by the State Department. The Immigration and Naturalization Service, historically located in the Department of Justice, oversees the administration and enforcement of the country's immigration laws as spelled out in the Immigration and Nationality Act. Because of its border control functions, the INS is currently the largest federal enforcement agency.[40] The commissioner of the INS—a political appointee—works with the White House and Congress to draft immigration legislation and it administers the myriad of visa categories, as well as overseeing the country's naturalization policy.

In March 2003 the INS will be moved into the new Department of Homeland Security, with the service and enforcement sides of the agency split apart. Proponents of the move argue that the events of September 11, 2001, clearly demonstrate how immigration issues are tied to national security; opponents worry that security concerns will generate unwarranted suspicion—and delays—in the immigration and naturalization files of law-abiding individuals.

In the special case of refugee populations, the State Department works with various non-profit organizations, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and the INS to resettle individuals fleeing persecution and political violence. In particular, the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration funds and administers the American overseas refugee processing program, which can include the transportation and reception of refugee populations and the instruction of those headed to the U.S. in rudimentary English and "cultural orientation." It also provides limited financial support for immediate settlement during a refugee's first 30 days in the U.S. The federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), housed in the Department of Health and Human Services, administers domestic resettlement programs in coordination with state-level agencies and local and national voluntary organizations, including refugee-run mutual assistance associations.

The State Government

To receive federal refugee resettlement funds, state governments are required to establish state agencies dedicated to overseeing the successful integration of

refugee populations. Massachusetts' Office for Refugee and Immigrants (ORI), established in 1985, serves this function, and also has as its mission to act as a public advocate for refugees and immigrants, including making mainstream programs linguistically and culturally accessible to newcomers and acting as a clearing house for information.

Various other state departments look after specific policy areas that touch on the immigrant population. Thus, the Department of Education oversees and enforces the state's bilingual education program, while the Department of Public Health has established a separate Office of Multicultural Health (a merger of the previous Office of Refugee and Immigrant Health and Office of Minority Health) to deal with the particular health needs of the foreign-born. These include building partnerships with newcomer communities, providing technical assistance around interpreting and translation, enhancing hospital interpreter services, and gathering and publishing information on newcomer communities.

Local Governments

Local governments, especially those with large immigrant population, deal with the foreign-born in all the services they offer. However, few have established an agency or contact person dedicated to the specific problems of immigrant populations. One exception is the City of Boston's Office of New Bostonians, established by Mayor Thomas M. Menino in 1998. Heralded as the only such office among American urban centers, the Office of New Bostonians has as its mission the integration of linguistically and culturally diverse immigrant communities into the economic, civic, social and cultural life of the city, and the promotion of commemoration and public understanding of immigrants' contributions.[41]

The Office has undertaken a series of initiatives to facilitate communication and contact between immigrant residents and City Hall, including community days that explain the function of various city agencies, a multicultural job fair promoting public employment opportunities, development of departmental cultural competency plans and efforts to foster voting among immigrant populations.

The city of Boston also employs some co-ethnic and co-linguist liaison officers in the city's Office of Neighborhood Services, including people who can speak Chinese, Vietnamese, Spanish and Cape Verdean Creole. The main function of Neighborhood Services is to facilitate information flows, the use of city services and to act as an emergency contact point for local communities.

Nonprofit Service Providers and Advocacy Groups

In addition to public agencies, a host of nonprofit service providers, community-based organizations and advocacy groups deal daily with immigrant populations and speak out on their behalf. Indeed, many immigrants interact only indirectly with government through such local community groups. Nonprofit organizations

use grants from federal, state and local governments to deliver job training, adult education, ESL and citizenship classes, family programs, legal assistance and health care services. Such programs also receive funding from philanthropic foundations, local businesses and private charitable donations. In its 2000 guide to community resources, the Boston Office of New Bostonians listed well over 100 organizations able to provide specialized services to refugee and immigrant populations.[42]

Space limitations make a comprehensive survey of all these organizations impossible, though several deserve special mention. The International Rescue Committee, International Institute of Boston, Catholic Charities, Lutheran Social Services and the Jewish Vocational Services stand out as particularly important resources for newly arriving refugees, parolees and asylum seekers. Despite the religious connection of most, all are non-sectarian in the services they offer and help refugees from around the world. Federal and state funding, as well as an explicit policy of building community organizations, have also resulted in the formation of various mutual assistance associations largely run by refugees, such as the Vietnamese American Civic Association in Dorchester.

For other communities, there exist three broad categories of community organizations. Ethnic-specific organizations arise when a particular community does not have services provided in its language or with sensitivity to cultural heritage. A second group of organizations start as ethnic-specific associations but branch out to embrace a larger immigrant population. Examples of such transformation include the Irish Immigration Center and the Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers, a group that started as two local Portuguese organizations in Somerville and Cambridge. Some formerly Chinese organizations, such as the South Cove Community Health Center, have expanded their clientele to include other East Asian populations. A variation on such pan-ethnic organizations are those that immediately aim to serve a broad immigrant population, as is the case of community organizations offering Spanish services or Asian groups such as the Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence. Finally, a third category of organizations focuses largely on native-born Americans, which offer special programs or hire bilingual employees to help serve newcomer populations. Community development corporations or agencies serving seniors fit this bill.

In the area of advocacy, two organizations deserve special mention. One, the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Alliance (MIRA), was founded in 1987 to integrate the activities of social-service providers and advocacy agencies dealing with immigrants and refugees. MIRA's membership is largely institutional: currently more than 130 organizations are part of MIRA. These groups range from the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts to union locals to ethnic mutual-aid societies, with the plurality of members engaged in health-related programs.[43] MIRA lobbies state government for expanded access to state programs,

such as the state's Emergency Room Interpreter Law and restored benefits for non-citizens cut under the 1996 Welfare Reform Act.

MIRA monitors executive-branch implementation at the state level. In recent months, MIRA has engaged in a concerted campaign to ensure that public and private agencies reach out to legal immigrants eligible for federally funded food stamps. The coalition also carries out a limited number of programs funded by the Commonwealth and private foundations to facilitate immigrant integration directly. And, finally, MIRA aims to develop immigrants' own political voice. As a 501(c)3 charity, MIRA does not endorse political candidates, but it promotes civic participation and works with member organizations to naturalize immigrants in the Boston area.

A second emerging advocacy voice is that of ¿Oiste? which means "Did you hear?" in Spanish. The group consists of both a tax-deductible civic education wing and an explicitly political arm. Founded in 1999 as the first statewide Latino political network, the organization focuses on providing nuts-and-bolts bilingual support to Latino candidates and civic groups, teaching them how to target voters by mail and on the telephone. To further these ends, the group also works with good-government election-reform organizations like Boston Vote and the Massachusetts Voters for Clean Elections. Goals include the implementation of instant-runoff voting and same-day voter registration, and expanding public financing of electoral campaigns.

In the policy arena ¿Oiste? has specialized in state-level process issues. It advocated substantial redrawing of boundaries in state legislative seats in Boston, Lawrence, and Chelsea after the 2000 census. The final electoral map reflected few of the group's priorities, and ¿Oiste? later led a coalition to sue the Commonwealth for violating the Civil Rights Act of 1965.[44] In these and other efforts, it seeks to systematically provide Latino groups with the tools needed to attain power, and to shift the dynamics of electoral politics in Massachusetts.[45]

Foreign Governments and Consulates

Unlike most other Boston-area policy issues, immigration also brings in international actors, most notably foreign governments working through their Boston-based Consulates. There are 33 Consulates or Consul-General offices in Boston. Consulates rarely interfere directly with domestic American issues, but they will speak out on behalf of their nationals when they perceive a need.

Consulates also provide immigrants with important services, such as the renewal of passports, and can be active in local immigrant communities. Representatives from the Dominican Republic, for example, are involved with the Dominican community in Jamaica Plain, promoting economic development and civic engagement in the home country through remittances, the establishment of business enterprises in the DR, and promotion of community-building

projects.[46] Such activities, known as transnationalism, allow immigrants to keep a foot in two places: they adjust to life in the U.S. at the same time as they keep connected to the home country.

ISSUES FACING THE REGION

Processing Newcomers

State and local governments have little control over the processing and granting of immigrant visas and citizenship status. The State Department issues visas and immigration documents to those living abroad, while the Immigration and Naturalization Service administers the adjudication of immigrant and naturalization petitions within the United States.

A number of factors in the late 1990s produced substantial backlogs in the processing of immigrant petitions and naturalization applications. The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 allowed certain illegal aliens resident in the U.S. since January 1, 1982, to legalize their status and then apply for permanent residence. Nearly 3 million individuals took advantage of this program, and by 1995, many were eligible for citizenship. A surge in applications for adjustment of status occurred from 1995 to 1997 as individuals with expired visas living illegally in the U.S. took advantage of Section 245(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act to adjust their status to permanent residency without returning overseas. Over fiscal years 1996 to 2000, the regional INS service center in Vermont received about 1 million applications and petitions annually for immigration and naturalization services, but could only complete 700,000 to 800,000 a year.[48]

Anticipating the increase in workload, the INS launched the Citizenship USA program in August 1995 to reduce anticipated backlogs. But questions of political partisanship and concerns over inadequate criminal background checks led to the program's suspension, requiring the INS to implement new quality procedures in November 1996 that slowed processing times.[49] The slowdown coincided with a sudden upsurge in naturalization applications, as immigrants sought to obtain citizenship following welfare reform and a revision of deportation rules. By 1998 it took the Vermont office on average 31 months to process an application for adjustment of status (I-285), while the Boston district office had a backlog of 42,000 requests for naturalization (N-400).[50] Delays spiked up in 1999 to 133 months for I-285 applications and 28 months for N-400s, then fell to 15 months, and six to nine months, respectively, in 2000.[51] Long waiting times not only affect access to government benefits and jobs, and access to the ballot box, but they can postpone family reunification, since only citizens may sponsor immediate relatives outside of the annual numerical quotas.[52]

The INS has worked hard to reduce delays in the processing of immigration and naturalization applications. Advocacy groups such as the Citizenship Now Collaborative, of which the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee

Advocacy Coalition is a member, recommend that naturalization cases be resolved within six months.[53] By 2000, the processing time for most naturalization applications ranged from six to nine months, in line with wait time prior to 1995.[54] But after September 11, processing times increased again with new INS security measures. MIRA and other groups have called for better record keeping by the agency. In an April 2002 restructuring plan, the INS announced plans to hire a chief information officer directly responsible to the INS Commissioner.[55]

The INS faces radical reorganization in the coming year, with its impending move to the new department of Homeland Security.[56]

Tracking Aliens

Educators are closely watching developments that could impinge on foreign enrollments.

Following the 1979 Iranian hostage crisis, when the INS was unable to provide Congress with an accurate count of Iranian students in the United States, the agency required all schools to provide an annual report of foreign students. A push to an electronic tracking system gained steam after the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center, as one bomber entered the U.S. on a student visa. In the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 Congress mandated the creation of a database by January 2003, but colleges and universities opposed the system.

With a changed domestic climate post-September 11—three of the hijackers entered the U.S. on student visas—educators now accept the new Student Exchange and Visitor Information System in principle but still argue that government must provide greater resources for implemention.[58] Under the 2001 USA Patriot Act, schools were required to be linked to the system by January 2003. The system will provide INS and border inspection stations with personal data and academic information, including the student's major, expected graduation date, and enrollment status.

Becoming Citizens

Citizenship has emerged as a key issue for a host of immigration policy areas. In the U.S., levels of citizenship among the foreign-born have fallen dramatically—from 64 percent in 1970 to 40 percent in 2000. While about 30 percent of this decline is due to the rapid influx of newcomer communities over the past three decades, similar declines are not found in Canada, despite an even higher proportion of immigrants living in that country.[59] Government programs in Canada—enacted by federal, provincial and municipal governments—have encouraged citizenship and political participation in immigrant communities.

The percentage of foreign-born people acquiring citizenship is slightly higher than the national average in Massachusetts (about 44 percent in 2000) and in Greater Boston (42 percent).

People from Mexico and Canada are least likely to naturalize while those from Asia are relatively more likely to do so. In part, the geographic proximity to the home country makes moving to the U.S. seem less permanent for those from North America, and chances for return higher. In 2000, the INS reported that immigrants from Canada and Mexico waited on average 11 years before applying for naturalization while those born in Asia waited only 8 years.[60] For migrants fleeing repression and turmoil in certain Southeast Asian countries—notably Vietnam and Cambodia—the security of U.S. citizenship makes naturalization a particularly attractive choice. Other Asian groups seek citizenship in order to sponsor relatives.

We gain a sense for these differences from Table 5. The table shows the percent of immigrants naturalized for the city of Boston based on how long they had lived in the United States and in which region of the world they were born. While two-thirds or more of all immigrants with 20 years of residence had acquired U.S. citizenship, only 4 to 20 percent of recent migrants had done the same. Naturalization levels also exhibit substantial variation by region of origin. If we consider immigrants who arrived in the U.S. between 1980 and 1989, less than a quarter of Mexicans had become citizens by 2000, compared to almost 60 percent of those from Asia, the majority of whom are Chinese or Vietnamese. The particular burdens faced by non-citizens consequently hit certain immigrant communities more heavily than others.

The Massachusetts Citizenship Assistance Program, which began in July 1997, provides funds on a competitive basis to community organizations for ESL/Civics classes, native language citizenship instruction and application assistance. The original appropriation allocated $2 million to CAP and specified an intention, subject to renewal, to fund the program for three years. According to

TABLE 5. NATURALIZATION AMONG THE FOREIGN-BORN, BY REGION OF BIRTH AND PERIOD OF ARRIVAL

	Period of Arrival		
Region of Birth	**1990–2000**	**1980–89**	**pre–1980**
Europe	20.7%	56.4%	77.8%
Asia	20.2	59.9	84.2
Africa	14.1	43.1	66.4
Caribbean	16.6	44.0	68.1
Mexico	6.8	23.9	62.6
Central America	9.6	26.2	64.5
South America	6.4	36.2	67.9
North America (excluding Mexico)	4.1	30.8	65.2

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

the state Office for Refugees and Immigrants, which runs the program, CAP funds helped more than 3,200 immigrants become citizens in the first two years of operation.[61] Because of budget shortfalls, Governor Jane Swift eliminated the CAP budget for 2003. Such cuts are understandable in a period of fiscal belt-tightening. However, recent research suggests that programs to facilitate newcomer integration—such as the CAPS program or English as Second language classes—promote naturalization among immigrants and foster political leadership and community organizing.[62]

Voting and Elections

Citizenship is central to participation in a community's civic and political life, especially elections. A major issue for many is how to ensure that immigrants—citizens or not—have a say in local, state and national affairs. Among proposals to foster immigrant participation is a debate regarding the link between electoral participation and formal U.S. citizenship.

Substantial immigration can change the demographic composition of an area, forcing changes in political boundaries under the Voting Rights Act.[63] Under law, legislators often must make an effort to create majority-minority districts in areas where a minority of residents are non-Hispanic whites, where the minority population is politcally cohesive, and where efforts to elect candidates of color have been frustrated by white bloc voting (the so-called *Gingles* test). Across the United States, the redistricting process following the 2000 census produced disagreement about how to draw these lines—and Massachusetts proved no exception. Immigrants are counted for the purpose of redrawing electoral maps, but often they cannot participate in the electoral system because they lack U.S. citizenship. As a result, a majority-minority area might have a white majority voting population even when most residents are minorities.

In the Boston metro region, there are relatively few majority-minority districts, despite the area's rapidly changing ethnic makeup. With the exception of electoral strength among African-Americans in areas such as Roxbury and Mattapan, political representation remains largely dominated by Boston's famed white ethnics. There is, however, some indication that the coming decade might bring increased diversity to political offices in the metro area. Most successful in this regard have been black immigrant groups, notably Haitians and West Indians, who often team up with native black populations. In 2000 Marie St. Fleur became the first Haitian immigrant elected to a state body in the U.S. following her successful bid for a seat in the Commonwealth's House of Representatives.[64] She represents the same racially mixed Uphams Corner seat that elected Nelson Merced, a Puerto Rican, and Charlotte Golar Ritchie, an African American who now directs housing policy for the city of Boston.[65] Latino presence in the state legislature is also growing, since in January 2003 Jarrett Barrios became the first Latino elected to the state Senate.[66]

Asian populations have experienced fewer political successes, though in 1999, Rithy Uong of Lowell became the first Cambodian in the United States elected to city council, and in other communities Asian-Americans such as Dan Lam (Randolph) and Amy Mah Sangiolo (Newton) have served on municipal councils.[67] In the city of Boston, although non-Hispanic whites still outnumber minority communities in registering to vote, recent elections have witnessed higher turnout at many wards dominated by minority residents.[68]

Although electoral victory usually requires the sort of coalition-building that Barrios used to success, the drawing of district boundaries can significantly affect the chance of minority candidates, especially when ethnic communities comprise a large proportion of a district's population. In most states, redistricting battles focused on federal boundaries, reflecting the high stakes and close partisan divisions in the U.S. Congress. In Massachusetts, the main impact of redistricting occurred at the state or municipal level, with relatively little debate on Congressional seats. Both House and Senate plans made the 8th Congressional District, now represented by Michael Capuano, majority non-white. The plan enacted, under which 51 percent of residents are non-white, moves parts of Dorchester and Jamaica Plain into the district, while taking out Belmont and Watertown.[69] The major redistricting debate at the federal level concerned a series of back-and-forth battles about whether to preserve a seat in the Merrimack Valley or add one in southeastern Massachusetts.

The sharpest controversies in the 2000 redistricting occurred when drawing lines for the state House of Representatives. Since districts in the state House are quite small—usually about 40,000 residents—communities that would not be significant at the level of a Congressional district can suddenly play a role in determining political outcomes. Under state redistricting plans the number of seats with majority nonwhite populations in the House of Representatives actually dropped, and a district in mid-Cambridge represented for more than 25 years by a person of color was eliminated, despite an unsuccessful suit against the plans by the city of Cambridge.[70] In Chelsea, where foreign-born residents now comprise 36 percent and Latinos 48 percent of the population, the Latino community remained divided between two seats represented by white Democrats from outside the city, Eugene O'Flaherty of Charlestown and Kathi-Anne Reinstein of Revere. Latinos in Chelsea have become active in city politics, particularly around the issue of education, electing members to the city council and school committee, but they have been thwarted in electing a Latino to the state legislature.[71] In both seats, the majority of the population, as well as the majority of voters, remained white. Similarly, although the majority of the population in Anthony Petrucelli's East Boston seat is now Latino, the voting-age population remains majority non-Hispanic white. A coalition of activist groups, led by the National Voting Rights Initiative, filed suit in federal court against the plan, saying it violated the Voting

Rights Act. The proposed alternative would create a majority-Latino seat stretching through Chelsea and into East Boston's Maverick Square. As Giovanna Negretti, Executive Director of ¿Oiste?, said, "People in Chelsea feel disconnected from the process. They don't participate because of it."[72]

Redistricting has also raised controversy at the local level. For nearly two decades, the Boston City Council has used a mixed system for electing city councilors: four councilors are elected at-large under a plurality system, and nine councilors are elected from single-member districts representing particular neighborhoods. The elected at-large members have all been white, although Felix Arroyo, a longtime activist in the Latino community, took a seat on the council when Francis "Mickey" Roache became Suffolk County Register of Deeds in January 2003. Despite the fact that the majority of Boston's population is non-white, six of the nine council districts have white majorities, and only two of the seats—District Four, represented by Charles Yancey, and District Seven, represented by Charles Turner—are held by members of minorities, both of whom are African-American. Ultimately, all the councilors except Yancey and Turner approved a plan drafted by Dorchester's Maureen Feeney. It shifts only 19 of the city's 254 precincts among districts, and creates in Hyde Park and a small portion of Mattapan a fourth majority-minority district based on population, but in which the majority of voters remains white.

Voter registration and electoral participation rates show that many Asian groups appear reluctant to become involved in political contests. According to Paul Watanabe and Michael Liu, whereas just under 70 percent of adult citizens in ten local communities are registered to vote, this percentage falls to barely 50 percent of all Asian-American citizens.[73] In only one community—Lexington—do Asian-Americans' registration rates equal that of the total population, while in Cambridge and Quincy over 25 percentage points separate Asian-Americans' from the city-wide registration rate.[74] In Brookline and Cambridge, Asian Americans make up more than 14 percent of the resident population, but account for 6 and 5 percent, respectively, of the total voting population.[75] In Malden and Quincy, the repercussions are even more dramatic: Asian-Americans account for over 13 and 14 percent of each community's population, respectively, but only comprise a bit over 5 percent of all registered voters.

The story of Latino communities is quite similar, though they are also affected by low levels of naturalization that drive down voting participation even further. In contrast, black immigrants appear to become active in politics more quickly than other newcomer groups once they acquire U.S. citizenship.[76] As Table 5 shows, levels of naturalization among immigrants from Africa and the Caribbean are mid-way between the low levels of Latin and North Americans, and the relatively high levels for Europeans and Asians. Black immigrants—especially those from the English-speaking West Indies—have high voter turnout

once they acquire citizenship. According to one analysis by *The Boston Globe*, rapid increases in voter turnout by West Indians have reversed historically low levels of participation in Mattapan.[77]

Given low levels of citizenship among some foreign-born groups, a number of organizations and cities have proposed allowing non-citizen voting at the local level. In 1996 and again in 1998 the town of Amherst passed a bill allowing local alien suffrage, and in 1999 Cambridge city council passed a measure with a vote of 5–2 to allow immigrants to vote for school committee and city council elections regardless of citizenship status. Historically,[78] more than half of U.S. states and territories allowed some form of alien suffrage at the state and federal level, but the practice lapsed in the late 19th century and finally ended in 1926 when the Arkansas Supreme Court upheld an earlier referendum removing alien suffrage from the state constitution.[79] Today, a few municipalities allow resident aliens to vote, usually for school board elections, such as in New York City and Arlington, Virginia.[80] ¿Oiste? and other Latino groups have been pushing for similar extensions of the franchise in cities with large immigrant populations, particularly Chelsea, but the city appears unlikely to approve such legislation in the near future.

Proponents of non-citizen voting ask why non-citizens who carry many of the responsibilities of citizens—notably the burdens of taxation and eligibility for the draft—have no right to use the ballot box to influence decisions affecting distribution of public monies or engagement in military activities. Others point out that local suffrage can act as an important training ground for future citizens, teaching immigrants about the American political system. At a symbolic level, the right to vote provides "increased dignity and self-esteem . . . which is a foundation for social recognition."[81]

Opponents express both normative and technical concerns. Since the process of naturalization in the United States is relatively simple and accessible, especially as compared to most other liberal democracies, removing one of the main benefits of naturalization will undermine the value of American citizenship. Successful naturalization requires a basic familiarity with U.S. history and politics and a rudimentary understanding of English, knowledge that ensures a better informed citizenry and, hopefully, better public decision-making. At a symbolic level, opponents feel that immigrants should take an affirmative step toward joining the American polity. Thus, when new citizens take the oath of allegiance, they swear to uphold the democratic institutions of the country. The technical details of alien suffrage also raise questions: If alien suffrage is restricted to local elections, how would a city administer a dual system in which some voters cast ballots in all electoral contests while others are restricted to only a few races?

Maryland leaves local franchise rules up to the localities, but in Massachusetts the state legislature must approve any changes in local election

laws. So far, no proposal has won the necessary home-rule petition at the State House.[82] Recourse to the courts is probably not a viable option to force the implementation of alien suffrage. Although the U.S. Supreme Court has never faced the issue of non-citizen franchise directly, numerous court writings and various lower court decisions accept the practice as a legislative prerogative.

Overcoming Linguistic Barriers

Acquisition of competence in the English language—by both children and adults—is perhaps the most politically charged issue facing immigrants and their communities.[83] Residents of Massachusetts speak approximately 100 different languages. According to the 2000 Census, more than 600,000 individuals in the MAPC area, or 21 percent of all those five years and older, speak a language other than English in the home. About two-fifths of these individuals are American-born, 9 percent of the region's native population.[84] The other three-fifths are foreign born. In sum, three of every four immigrants speaks a language other than English at home.

As shown in Table 4, the percentage of foreign language speakers varies widely among cities and towns, from an astounding 58 percent in Chelsea to less than 4 percent in Marshfield, Duxbury, and Pembroke.

Unlike many other urban centers, no one language dominates the region. In six of the MAPC's 101 communities, Spanish is the preponderate non-English household language. In three communities, Asian languages top the list. The primary foreign languages in the remaining 92 communities are Indo-European, a broad category that includes European languages (with the exception of Spanish); certain languages of the Indian subcontinent; and various Creole dialects, including those spoken by some Haitian or Cape Verdean immigrants.[85]

Difficulty communicating in English affects all linguistic minorities, but to varying degrees. Less than half, or 48 percent, of people speaking an Asian or Pacific Islander language report that they can speak English well, compared to 72 percent of those speaking primarily an African language. Among Spanish speakers, one in two (55 percent) communicates well in English, as do almost two-thirds (63 percent) of those speaking an Indo-European language in the home.

Given that 42 percent of immigrants in Greater Boston have difficulty communicating in English, linguistic barriers are a critical public policy concern for immigrant communities. The consequences of limited English ability are wide-ranging. These individuals often face difficulty advancing in the labor market. Non-English-proficient people also experience difficulty communicating with individuals in a host of public and private institutions, including schools, hospitals, utility companies and financial institutions. They frequently require assistance in filling out routine paperwork ranging from applications for a driver's license to forms for citizenship. As a result, many become dependent on the help of friends and family, frequently a younger child in the household. Such reliance

TABLE 4: THE NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING POPULATIONS OF GREATER BOSTON

Communities with a share of people who speak a language other than English in the home that is greater than the state's average of 20.9 percent.

Community	Population over age 5	Non-English speaking	Cannot speak English well	Speak Spanish	Speak Indo-Euro language	Speak Asian language
Chelsea	32,314	58.4%	30.8%	43.8%	9.1%	3.8%
Somerville	74,034	35.6	16.8	7.8	22.5	4.3
Lynn	82,539	34.1	17.1	16.7	9.7	6.6
Boston	557,376	33.4	16.3	13.6	12.1	6.2
Malden	53,061	31.3	16.3	4.3	14.0	11.2
Cambridge	97,174	31.2	10.2	6.8	14.6	7.6
Everett	35,805	30.5	15.5	9.6	16.6	2.8
Framingham	62,499	29.2	14.2	9.9	14.9	3.3
Revere	44,621	29.1	14.7	9.0	13.4	4.6
Brookline	54,420	29.0	9.6	3.6	12.4	10.0
Waltham	56,476	26.5	9.6	7.5	12.9	5.0
Randolph	29,141	26.2	11.0	3.3	13.2	8.3
Watertown	31,547	25.8	9.4	3.0	18.6	3.0
Quincy	83,593	23.8	12.1	1.9	6.2	14.4
Medford	53,060	21.2	8.9	2.5	15.0	2.9
Newton	79,230	21.2	7.3	2.3	11.5	5.7
State	**2,879,899**	**20.9**	**8.9**	**6.1**	**9.8**	**4.1**

can create significant intergenerational conflict. Twenty-nine percent of children in Greater Boston between the ages of 5 and 17 live in a household where at least one family member speaks a language other than English. When children act as interpreters and translators, parents who traditionally command respect in the family appear less competent than their children, undermining their authority. Children also feel a burden and can face additional stresses if they become privy to the family's medical or financial problems.

Over 5 percent of households—some 66,600 homes—have no one in the home who can provide assistance communicating in English. These households are what the Census Bureau labels "linguistically isolated."[86] Linguistic isolation affects children and seniors to a slightly greater degree: 5.3 percent of children between the ages of 5 and 17, and 5.5 percent of seniors 65 and over live in linguistically isolated households, compared to 4.9 percent of adults 18–64.

A broad consensus exists across the political spectrum, and among both immigrants and the native-born, over the importance of English language skills.

English ability opens doors to better jobs, facilitates communication with public and private institutions and permits more interpersonal contact between immigrants and the native born. According to a study undertaken by the Massachusetts Institute for a New Commonwealth, workers who have little or no English-speaking ability earn 15 to 20 percent less than their immigrant peers who speak English well.[87] Although a number of English as Second Language classes (ESL) exist in the Hub, demand far outstrips supply. The Office of New Bostonians estimates an average two-year wait for public ESL classes, with a somewhat reduced wait for priority clients such as those who have children in the city's public schools.[88]

LANGUAGE AND THE SCHOOLS: Many of the children in linguistically isolated households find themselves in the state's bilingual education program. Statewide, just under 5 percent of public education students (some 45,000 children) are considered limited-English proficient.89 Another 75,000 attend regular classrooms, but speak a primary language other than English.90 These percentages, and enrollment in bilingual education classes, vary greatly by city.

Approximately 20 percent of students in Boston public schools and 16 percent of Somerville students are limited-English proficient, in contrast to only two percent of children in the Lexington and Belmont public school systems. Considering the broader category of students whose primary language is not English, but who might not be enrolled in a formal bilingual education program, over three quarters of the students in Lawrence, two-thirds of those in Chelsea, half of those in Lowell, over 40 percent of those in Somerville and approximately a third of K-to-12 students in the Boston and Cambridge public schools were non-native English speakers.

Voters in 2002 approved a ballot measure ending the state's bilingual education programs and instituting a one-year "immersion" program for students who do not speak English. The Question 2 ballot measure, promoted by California businessman Ron Unz, provoked bitter controversy among educators and advocates for minorities. The law, which passed by a resounding 70-to-30-percent margin—not only overturned a generation of bilingual education policy but also superseded another reform passed just months before by the state legislature.

Question 2 requires all English learners to attend one year in an English immersion classroom, grouping together children from various linguistic backgrounds who have the same English competency. Except under specific exceptions, children would be transitioned into regular classrooms following one year. The measure also requires teachers to primarily teach their students in English, and it provides parents with the option to sue any school employee, school committee member or other elected official or administrator who refuses to implement the new law.

Question 2 ended an era in Massachusetts education policy. In 1971, Massachusetts became the first state in the nation to offer full bilingual education (MGL Chapter 71A), preceding the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Lau v. Nichols* (1974). The Massachusetts law required school districts to provide transitional bilingual education services if there were 20 or more students in the district with the same primary language. Students consequently learned academic subjects such as math, history, and science in their native language, while getting separate instruction in English language. A child stays in the program for three years or until the child can perform successfully in English-only classes, whichever occurs first.

The Commonwealth's policy on bilingual education was modified in August 2002 under the English Opportunities for All Act, which offered greater choice to parents and local school boards in deciding how to teach students with limited English proficiency. The legislation permitted a variety of options, ranging from traditional bilingual education to mainstreaming of students into regular classrooms. The law requires that teachers receive specific pedagogical training and demonstrate fluency in both languages. The law limits students to two years in traditional bilingual classrooms.

In the immediate aftermath of Question 2's passage, bilingual education advocates and local school administrators openly discussed strategies to sidestep that new law's imperatives. Whatever the eventual policy for Massachusetts public schools, children will be required to receive access to English language instruction. Such guarantees are not in place for adult immigrants, despite a strong need and interest in acquiring or improving English skills. Adults get a patchwork of services, many with eligibility limitations or long waiting lists. Those who receive the most help include refugees resettled in the region by local volunteer organizations. These individuals often have access to ESL instruction provided by their sponsors. Fees for such classes are nominal or waived entirely.

Refugees only account for a small percentage of all metro immigrants, so the majority of non-English speakers must turn to other services.[91] These are mostly offered by ethnic community organizations, local schools or for-profit businesses serving an immigrant clientele. In the case of non-profit organizations in particular, eligibility criteria limit classes to low-income workers who wish to improve their job opportunities. The state's Department of Transitional Assistance and others working in the field of public assistance encounter particular problems integrating individuals with limited English skills into the labor market.

BROADER LANGUAGE POLICY ISSUES: The politics of language extend beyond bilingual education. Some argue that American immigration laws should be changed to admit fewer individuals without a prior knowledge of English.[92] Such proposals would reduce the number of immigrants permitted entry under family

reunification provisions and increase visa allocation to people with special skills, including English ability. Others suggest that government, whether federal, state or municipal, should provide more funding for ESL classes, perhaps by extending to all newcomers the programs designed for refugees.

A third approach would encourage immigrant communities to set up nonprofit organizations or open for-profit businesses offering language instruction. Because learning English can have a direct impact on job outcomes, those who benefit most from such instruction should pay for it, according to this line of thinking. Those in favor of public financing respond that some immigrant groups have limited resources to set up community organizations and that providing government grants for ESL ultimately costs the public less for the problems stemming from linguistic isolation.

EMERGENCY LANGUAGE SERVICES: Beyond the longterm question of how to improve the English-language abilities of immigrants, policy-makers are also concerned with providing translation services in emergency situations. Successful lobbying by immigrant and health groups led to passage of the 2000 Translation and Interpreter Services Act, which guarantees competent interpreter services in all hospitals that provide acute care. The law also requires that state health plans reimburse hospitals for the cost of providing such services.

While most medical practitioners and hospital administrators acknowledge the need for language services, the costs and punitive consequences from a failure to provide such services leave many worried. Patients and their families can sue acute care facilities for failing to provide competent interpretation. It is possible that the precedent set by this bill will spawn subsequent efforts in other areas of service delivery.

Dealing with Discrimination

Throughout American history, newcomers have struggled to deal with discrimination because of their accent, dress, cultural traditions, religious practices, ethnicity, nationality or skin color.[93] Even though the U.S. and Massachusetts have enacted a raft of laws and regulations against discrimination, the problem persists.

Problems range from mostly comic miscommunication to serious violations of civil rights, including hate crimes. In some cases, immigrants face the same difficulties as native-born individuals, especially when prejudice and discrimination stem from physical differences. Other problems are unique to those unfamiliar with American ways. For example, in some East Asian cultures it is considered rude to have direct eye contact with someone in a position of authority. An immigrant raised in such a cultural tradition might be reluctant to look directly at a police officer if asked a question. According to American cultural practices, lack of eye contact might signal guilt or the desire to hide something, potentially

prompting suspicion from a law-enforcement officer. In other cases, practices permitted in an immigrant's home country are frowned upon in American society. The use of corporal punishment to discipline a child might be accepted as sometimes necessary in the homeland, but in the U.S. such acts can prompt the intervention of the state's Department of Social Services.

Record keeping of incidents of discrimination is virtually impossible, but problems stemming from differences in cultural understanding recur consistently. In response, various public and private initiatives attempt to raise the consciousness of immigrants' traditions and to educate immigrant communities about U.S. practices of child-rearing, relations between men and women, health care, law enforcement, and other potentially problematic issues.

When immigrants or their children face clear discrimination or violation of civil rights, individuals have recourse in a number of public agencies. The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination's (MCAD) enforces the Commonwealth's anti-discrimination laws for employment, housing, public accommodations, services, credit and education. In 2001, MCAD reported 4,000 new cases, 25 percent of which stemmed from discriminatory treatment based on race and another 8 percent of which concerned an individual's national origin.[94] Hate crimes—criminal acts against people or property that are motivated by prejudice based on race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender or disability—are prosecuted by a county District Attorney's office.

The state Attorney General's office has the power to seek a civil injunction against anyone who is interfering with another person's civil rights. According to a 1998 report on bias crimes in Massachusetts, there were 576 incidents—likely a fraction of the total—reported to police.[95] Twenty-nine and 6 percent, respectively, were perpetrated against blacks or Asians. Fifteen percent were anti-Hispanic, 14 percent anti-Semitic, and another 2 percent targeted other racial or ethnic groups, including those of Arab origin.

Immigrants are probably less likely to access police and government agencies for redress in cases of bias because they are unfamiliar with the system, they are afraid of law enforcement officers, or they believe that their treatment is just the price to pay for being able to live in the United States. As a result, immigrant communities are particular dependent on public agencies that police such offenses and private watchdogs, raising the alarm when they perceive offensively anti-immigrant stances or behavior.[96]

In response to changing demographics and his sense that the word *minority* "implies inferiority and inequity among Americans," Boston City Council President Charles C. Yancey proposed in August 2001 a resolution to ban the City of Boston from using the word "minority" in any official document.[97] Yancey proposed replacing the term with "person of color" or more specific ethnic and racial categories. The resolution sparked an extended debate about the virtues of various classificatory terminology.

The city council unanimously passed the resolution, but Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino vetoed it, arguing that, whatever the word's limitations, the city had to use the term as long as other governmental entities did likewise. As a spokesman for the mayor's office explained, "The word is used throughout legal documents. It would be impossible for the city to eliminate the word while the state still uses it."[98] After Michael Flaherty replaced Yancey as Council president in 2002, the council never took up an override of the mayoral veto. The word "minority" continues to be used in city documents.

Work and Income Security

A report on the state's changing workforce prepared by the Massachusetts Institute for a New Commonwealth (MassINC) found that New England was almost three times as dependent on foreign workers as the nation as a whole.[99] Indeed, in the ten-year period 1986–97, immigrants accounted for 82 percent of growth in the state's civilian labor force, an increase of 165,000 workers. Under the Workforce Investment Act, passed by Congress in 1998, states must develop comprehensive plans to develop the local workforce, including a needs assessment of the local economy's future requirements. The Massachusetts plan calls for a concerted effort to attract out-of-state and foreign-born workers.

The economic needs of Greater Boston range from relatively low-skilled service and manufacturing positions to highly skilled professional jobs in finance, information technology, education, and health care. Overall, the foreign-born accounted for almost 13 percent of all employed persons in Massachusetts in 1996–97.[100] Immigrants constituted a disproportionate share of the workforce in manufacturing (22 percent) and personal and entertainment services (17 percent). In contrast, foreign-born workers were underrepresented in sectors such as agriculture, forestry and fishing (6 percent) and finance, insurance and real estate (8 percent). Immigrants account for a smaller percentage of the public workforce (9 percent) than their proportion in the overall labor market.

Given the continued restructuring of the economy, attracting skilled workers—including immigrants—figures as a priority in Massachusetts and Greater Boston. Massachusetts' immigrant population tends to be less educated than the native born, but the difference is less than in the rest of the country. According to Current Population Survey statistics from 1996 and 1997, only 12 percent of native-born 16- to 64-year-olds in Massachusetts do not have a high school diploma, compared to 30 percent of the foreign-born.[101] The proportion of those completing high school or holding a GED diploma was comparable: 31 percent for the U.S.-born and 29 percent for those born abroad. Only 24 percent of immigrants, but 32 percent of natives, held a bachelor's or more advanced degree.

Data from the mid-1990s show a strong trend for recent immigrants to be more skilled than established immigrant groups. Fully one third of recent immigrants held a bachelor's or more advanced degree, while only a quarter had failed

to finish high school. This pattern sets Massachusetts somewhat apart from dynamics elsewhere in the U.S., because of the importance of Greater Boston's medical industry, educational institutions, finance sector, and technology fields.

In Greater Boston, only 15 percent of the population over the age of 25 holds no high school diploma, while another 15 percent have a Bachelor's degree or more. Those who identify racially as Asians—including both the native and foreign-born—appear much more educated. Some 25 percent have completed four years of college and almost 30 percent hold a graduate or professional degree. Hispanics are slightly more likely to have advanced degrees, but also more than twice as likely to have only primary or some secondary schooling.

Immigrants lacking a high school diploma or GED were more likely to participate in the work force than similar native-born individuals, according to data from mid-1990s.[102] While 48 percent of foreign-born individuals with only primary schooling or some high school worked or were looking for work in 1996 and 1997, only 42 percent of the native-born were similarly situated.[103]

A growing body of scholarship reports that employers who seek to fill relatively unskilled jobs prefer to hire immigrant workers.[104] Such an argument gains credence from the fact that unemployment rates among immigrants with less than a high school education stood more than 2 percentage points lower than similarly situated natives in 1996 and 1997 (7.8 and 10.2, respectively).[105] The perception that immigrants work hard—and complain less—often makes them an attractive pool of labor.

Immigrants with high levels of education often struggle to gain work in their professions since employers do not recognize foreign credentials or work experience. Difficulties with language also undermine immigrants' ability to enter the labor force.[106] It is not surprising that unemployment rates among relatively better-educated immigrants are slightly higher than comparable native groups.

Except for those with a college diploma, immigrants consistently earn less than their native-born counterparts. Calculating a three year average of workers' wages annual earnings shows that in the period 1995 to 1997, a foreign-born employed person in Massachusetts only earned $25,389, or 74 percent, of the $34,226 earned by a native-born employee.[107] Critical in improving foreign-born earnings is the development of workforce training and certification programs.

Because foreign-born families in Massachusetts are more likely to be headed by a woman without a spouse, *family* income between immigrants and the native-born is even more unequal. Whereas the average native-born household enjoyed a median income of over $56,000 in the 1995–97 period, foreign-born families could only boast an income of $33,660.[108] Perhaps more troubling, the gap between immigrant and native family income appears to have grown over the 1990s. While real income for married couple families born in

the U.S. increased by 1 percent from 1989 to 1997, those of married immigrant families fell 9 percent. The trend for single-mother families was even more severe: a decrease of 18 percent for the native born, but 33 percent for immigrant households.

Not surprisingly, poverty among immigrant families in Massachusetts is much higher than for the native-born. Twenty-three percent of all immigrant families fell below national poverty thresholds, while almost half of all female-headed households lived in poverty.[109] Whereas 11 percent of all children of native-born parents lived in poverty in 1996–97, fully 40 percent of children in immigrant households were poor.[110]

Policies designed to supplement households' income or provide food security are of particular concern to immigrant communities. Linguistic and cultural barriers hamper access to public services and programs, but a more severe threat comes from recent changes to eligibility requirements. In 1996, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act explicitly limited state and local governments' authority to provide public benefits to undocumented immigrants unless a state law "affirmatively provides for such eligibility." Exempt under the law is the provision of emergency medical services, public health programs and other programs identified by the attorney general necessary for the protection of life and safety.

In a radical departure, welfare reform also denied benefits to legal permanent residents. Individuals who had worked less than 40 quarters could no longer access Supplemental Security Income or food stamps; the decision to provide Temporary Assistance to Needy Families or Medicaid was left up to state legislatures. The 1997 Balanced Budget Agreement restored SSI to those residing in the U.S. on or before August 22, 1996, the day the law went into effect, and some food stamp benefits were restored under the Agriculture Research, Extension, and Education Act of 1998 and the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002. However, legal permanent residents arriving in the U.S. after August 1996 generally remain ineligible for benefits in their first five years in the U.S. Under PRWORA, only three groups of non-citizens have access to public assistance: refugees in their first five to seven years following resettlement; immigrants with 40 quarters of work history; and non-citizens who have served in the U.S. military.[111]

Massachusetts initially offered a generous policy to immigrants cut from public assistance. In the year after passage of national welfare reform, Massachusetts restored limited funding for previously eligible categories of families.[112] Massachusetts continued to offer legal immigrants Medicaid and TANF benefits under the state Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC). Massachusetts continued to provide state health insurance to undocumented families and used state funds to finance continuation of food stamp

benefits. With the current fiscal crisis, programs directed at immigrants have faced severe cuts. The food stamp budget for legal immigrants was cut from $8.3 million in fiscal 2002 to $1 million in fiscal 2003.

Effects of welfare reform have been dramatic, but nowhere has the impact been felt as hard as for immigrant families. Nationally in 1994, 7.1 percent of households headed by a foreign-born person received AFDC cash assistance (later incorporated into TANF), and 12.6 percent received food stamps.[113] By 1999, use had fallen to 3.2 percent for TANF and 6.7 percent for food stamps.[114] The use of TANF among legal permanent residents has fallen 60 percent and among refugees 78 percent.[115] Significant declines are also seen in food stamps (48 percent), SSI (32 percent) and Medicaid (15 percent) among legal immigrants. Even more significant declines—53 percent for food stamps and 36 percent Medicaid—have been found for refugees.

According to figures from the Census Bureau, 7.6 percent of Americans citizens in the area fell below the poverty line, compared with 18.5 percent of non-citizens. In Boston, 26 percent of non-citizens and 22.5 percent of all immigrants lived in poverty. Other communities with high poverty rates were Cambridge (21.3 percent for non-citizens, 19.5 percent for all immigrants), Chelsea (23.9 and 22.5 percent), Everett (18.7 and 17.4 percent) and Peabody (18.1 and 11.7 percent). A high proportion of immigrants in a community's population does not always result in substantial poverty levels. In Framingham, 12.5 percent of non-citizens, and 9.9 percent of all immigrants were classified as poor, while in Quincy the comparable numbers were 14.2 percent and 11.3 percent.

Building Coalitions and Community

Coalition building always plays a central role in politics, but poses a more urgent challenge to immigrant communities, since none possesses the numbers, economic resources, or institutional strength to wield power on its own.

The coalition model drives the politics of non-native Americans at the state and local levels. But neither major party has aggressively courted immigrants. The Massachusetts Democratic Party, which dominates the legislature despite its continuing inability to retake the governor's office, is notoriously fractious, with urban and suburban, liberal and moderate factions often beholden to a single political entrepreneur rather than to longstanding structures or platforms. The party has made some efforts to reach out to immigrant groups, including putting Lowell's Rithy Uong and Dorchester's Marie St. Fleur on the Democratic State Committee, but its explicit political efforts in the 2002 election were limited to a few Spanish-language radio ads. The Republican Party, with shallower institutional roots, especially in the urban centers where immigrants concentrate, has done little to bring newcomers into the political process.[116]

Outside the electoral arena, coalitions form when advocacy groups organize around specific issues. Such efforts at times offer a greater chance of success, often producing only piecemeal change. Given limited resources in immigrant communities, mobilization is often reactive, responding to perceived attacks on immigrant benefits or rights, rather than a proactive move to extend policy.

Structures such as Boston's Office of New Bostonians provide a conduit for information, a sympathetic ear for grievances, and even a chance to learn how American politics works. Critics argue that specialized outreach structures place immigrants outside "normal politics"—and thus outside the real locus of power—while promoting the personalized mayoral machine. But the alternative—not having an office dedicated to newcomers' concerns—is likely worse for immigrant communities. In politics, some access is usually better than none. Other communities might consequently wish to follow Boston's lead and institute specific liaison people to link local government and immigrant communities.

BUILDING A NEW BOSTON

More than 60 years ago Oscar Handlin wrote that immigration was not just a chapter in Boston's history, but the very fabric from which the region has grown and evolved.[117] Handlin was referring to the region's experience in the 19th century, but his words hold as true for the contemporary period. Plenty of transformations explain the sea change between the tired metropolis of trust accounts, shoe manufacturing, and ward politics to a hi-tech high-education boomtown, but immigration surely ranks high on the list.[118] The integration of newcomers does not come without conflict, upheaval, and even failure. Since Boston's future is inextricably linked to immigrants, such challenges must be faced. Perhaps the historian Thomas O'Connor puts the matter best:

> The 'Old Boston'—the Boston as we have known it in history and in literature—no longer exists. Some time ago it ceased to be the Boston of John Winthrop, Josiah Quincy, or James Jackson Storrow . . . [I]t is equally clear that it is no longer the Boston of John Francis Fitzgerald, James Michael Curley, or John F. Kennedy. . . . All that may be wonderfully romantic and nostalgic, but it is now part of the city's past, not of its future. Instead of Yankees, Irish, and Italians, Boston is increasingly populated by African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans—these are our 'new Bostonians.'[119]

As Greater Boston becomes even more diverse over the next generation and takes its place as one of America's truly global cities, the challenge is to assure the new Bostonians the same opportunities as the native-born community.

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